

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 32

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 89

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 32—Relative to Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 29, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 32, Corbett. Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month.

This measure would designate the month of October 2013 as California Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month to recognize and acknowledge the significant contributions to the state made by Californians of Hindu heritage.

WHEREAS, California and the nation have been influenced by the extraordinary cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of its residents; and

WHEREAS, Of the over one billion Hindus worldwide, more than 2 million Hindu Americans live across the nation, and the State of California is home to the largest Hindu American population in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans in California represent diverse ethnic backgrounds, including individuals of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Malaysian, Indonesian, Afghani, Nepali, Bhutanese, Sri Lankan, Fijian, Caribbean, and European descent; and

WHEREAS, California and our nation have greatly benefited by Hindu Americans, especially through yoga, meditation, Vedanta philosophy, ayurvedic medicine, classical Indian music, art, and dance; and

WHEREAS, Swami Vivekananda is credited with officially introducing Hinduism to the United States in 1893 at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and in 1900 he arrived in San Francisco and founded the Vedanta Society; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans and the Vedanta philosophy have significantly influenced notable American intellectuals such as Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, J.D. Salinger, Christopher Isherwood, Aldous Huxley, Huston Smith, and Joseph Campbell; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans believe in promoting knowledge and education for all and as a group have the highest education rate in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Almost three-quarters of Hindu Americans are college graduates and nearly one-half of Hindu Americans have postgraduate degrees; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans share the entrepreneurial spirit of America, have been pioneers and leaders in Silicon Valley, and have particularly

excelled in the fields of information technology, science, medicine, law, and business; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans have founded roughly 10 percent of Silicon Valley startups in California, while comprising less than 1 percent of the United States' population; and

WHEREAS, The first Hindu American elected to Congress, Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, is a United States military veteran and took the oath of office on January 3, 2013, on a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, which is the most well known and widely read text of the many sacred texts of Hinduism; and

WHEREAS, The first Hindu temple in the United States was built in San Francisco, California, and at the dedication of the temple on January 7, 1906, it was proclaimed to be the "First Hindu Temple in the Whole Western World"; and

WHEREAS, There are now over 50 Hindu temples throughout California, and the San Francisco Bay area is home to over 20 Hindu temples; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans in cities throughout California celebrate numerous holidays and festivals, such as Diwali, which celebrates the victory of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance; and

WHEREAS, Hindu temples, organizations, and individuals in California actively engage in seva, or selfless service towards their fellow human beings through charity, public service, and the provision of free medical and legal services; and

WHEREAS, Ahimsa, which is the Sanskrit word for noninjury or nonviolence, is a central principle for Hindu Americans in California, and it provides the ethical foundation for vegetarianism, environmentalism, and harmonious living; and

WHEREAS, Hindu Americans have helped promote the shared American ideals of tolerance, pluralism, and religious freedom, which are inherent to their beliefs and respect the diversity of all faiths, and the Vedas, the 5,000 year old texts of Hindu Americans, provide the basis for these core principles: "Truth is one, the wise call it by many names" [Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti]; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby designates the month of October 2013 as California Hindu American Awareness and Appreciation Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes and acknowledges the significant contributions made by Californians of Hindu heritage to our state, and by adoption of this resolution, seeks to increase awareness and understanding about the Hindu American community; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.